

Whatcom Conservation District recognized for leadership and effectiveness

Wednesday, 20 January 2010

The leadership and effectiveness of the Whatcom Conservation District was recently recognized with several awards, including conservation district of the year, district manager of the year, a special service award, and a nationally published article highlighting the District's work in the Nooksack Basin.

By providing leadership and cooperative assistance to landowners, water quality in the Nooksack Basin has been protected and improved.

2009 District of the Year

The Washington Association of Conservation Districts (WACD) recognized the Whatcom Conservation District with the 2009 District of the Year award because of the district's tremendous efforts to get conservation on the ground and improve programs that serve landowners. District Manager George Boggs and Board Supervisor Joe Heller accepted the award at the WACD Annual Meeting in December 2009.

This award was earned through the quality of work performed by the Whatcom Conservation District, and is particularly notable because of the high quality of work being done throughout the state by other conservation districts. To receive statewide recognition is not only a big accomplishment for board supervisors and employees of the District, but also for the landowners and operators throughout the county who implement conservation best management practices.

2009 Area Award

The Whatcom Conservation District also received the 2009 Northwest Area District of the Year, competing with nine other western Washington conservation districts. George Boggs received the 2009 Manager of the Year award from the Washington State Conservation Commission, being recognized for his talent for supporting the Whatcom Conservation District Board of Supervisors and staff in finding innovative ways to address difficult natural resource issues.

Frank Corey Recognized

Frank Corey, Riparian Restoration Specialist at the Whatcom Conservation District, received a WACD 2009 Special Service Award.

The award recognizes Frank's outstanding professional contribution to the improvement of Washington's natural resources and improving conservation values in Whatcom County.

Anyone who drives through the County and sees hedgerows planted alongside ditches may be looking at the results of Frank's work.

Frank Corey has been with the District since 2004 and is known throughout Whatcom County as a leader in stream restoration techniques and wildlife habitat needs.

Nooksack River project nationally recognized

An example of the Whatcom Conservation District's work is featured on the EPA national website (<http://www.epa.gov/newsnotes>) titled The Nooksack River Watershed Success Story.

The article highlights the community-based Tenmile Creek Watershed Restoration Project which focused on working with landowners to identify and correct pollution problems from agricultural land and leaking septic systems in Tenmile Creek, a major tributary of the Nooksack River.

Nooksack River Basin landowners have planted more than 100,000 trees since the program began in 2001 and continued through 2008. The Whatcom Conservation District received multiple Ecology grants which supported a Tenmile Creek project manager, provided technical oversight, and installed 11 miles of hedgerows and riparian buffers within the 35-square mile watershed.

While the Tenmile project was a standout, the Whatcom Conservation District has other programs that serve landowners countywide. Examples include an effective livestock nutrient management program for commercial producers which provides technical assistance and costsharing for local farms, the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) which plants native riparian buffers along streams, a small farms program that serves the small acreage farms with educational opportunities and free technical assistance, and an annual native plant sale that serves thousands of customers. All of these programs have played a pivotal role in the success of improving the water quality in the Nooksack Basin.

More about the Whatcom Conservation District

The recognition received by the Whatcom Conservation District in 2009 comes after years of steady, quiet work on behalf of landowners and producers throughout Whatcom County. Their success is built upon a combination of:

- an effective Board of Supervisors;
- a cohesive staff;
- many strong local, state, tribal and federal partnerships;
- leadership from district management; and
- effective working relationships developed with local landowners.

To learn more about the Whatcom Conservation District visit <http://www.whatcomcd.org> or call them a (360) 354-2035.